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Affirmation:

United Methodists for Gay and Lesbian Concerns
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AUG 10 1981

Post Office Box 1021 Evanston, Illinois 60204

May 16, 1981

Wide commitment results from Spring Meeting

Fifty persons attended the Spring meeting of AFFIRMATION in Nashville, Tennessee, March 13-15, 1981. Nearly half of the participants were women. The meeting focused on the connections between institutional racism and homophobia in the American society and the United Methodist Church. Out of the meeting grew an increased commitment to focus the work of AFFIRMATION in the support of United Methodist lesbians and gay men whose ministry and lives reflect a commitment to work with our people in the building of a society that is open to us and other oppressed people.

Two events occurred at the meeting which have particular implications for our work as we find ourselves increasingly marginalized by the homophobic actions of the United Methodist Church. A reporter from the Nashville Banner, and a member of a United Methodist Church, desired to cover a part of our meeting. Since she would not commit herself to attend the whole meeting, nor identify herself as a participant in the meeting, she was asked to leave. On Saturday a front page story in the Nashville Banner appeared identifying where we were meeting. As a result of the story, the security force at Scarritt College, where we were meeting, received phone calls from individuals outraged by our meeting together. One of the phone callers identified himself as a representative of the Klan and a apparently threatened action for Saturday evening. While no action occurred, the incident growing out of the irresponsible reporting of the Banner, set up another potentially violent situation for ourselves and the Black security guards of Scarritt.

The reporter in question chose not to attend the public press conference which we called for Sunday afternoon at Edgehill United Methodist Church, and then filed a story appearing in the Banner - implying that we had held a closed press conference.

Two resign from committee

Peggy Harmon of Dallas, Texas, and Bill Matson of Washington, D.C. have resigned from the co-ordinating committee of AFFIRMATION. A committee of six persons, three lesbians and three gay men met in Toledo, Ohio in May to begin work on the work on the development of a proposal to be presented at next Fall's meeting defining the future leadership needs of AFFIRMATION, and developing suggested strategies for implementing AFFIRMATION's work in the last two year's of this quadrennium.

Jim Scurlock has also notified AFFIRMATION that he is planning to resign from the co-ordinating committee following the fall meeting in the Bay Area.

The structure and nominations committee has been asked to nominate persons to fill the unexpired terms of Peggy, Bill and Jim on the present co-ordinating committee.

The next newsletter will carry a detailed report of AFFIRMATION's resources and expenditures, as well as a description of financial needs for the support of AFFIRMATION's work.



New style set for West Coast conference

The fall meeting of AFFIRMATION is being planned for the weekend of Sept. 18-20, 1981 to be held in the San Francisco Bay area. The focus of the meeig will be on concerns related to the survival of lesbian and gay men dealing with the increased violence toward us and other minorities across the country, alternative economic systems for our people, building personal support networks among gay men and lesbians, and coping with psychological and physical harassment from authorities in American institutions (particularly from the United Methodist Church). A part of the weekend will be planning the content of an educational workshop for our supporters in the UMC which is called for the spring of 1982.

Participation in the meeting will be limited to those registering and attending the whole weekend, requiring arrival in San Jose, Oakland or San Francisco by 5:00 p.m. Friday afternoon. Departure should

be scheduled from the airports after 3:00 p.m. Sunday. The meeting will be held in an undisclosed place in the Bay area.

A number of resource people who are involved in ministries or community organizing around the survival of minorities will be invited to participate in the weekend with us, including persons from the Native American, Asian, Black and Hispanic communities, as well as other lesbians and gay men who are working full time for our people.

In addition to the weekend meeting of AFFIRMATION, the co-ordinating committee is is planning to hold a public meeting with interested United Methodists prior to our gathering, in San Francisco.

Registration forms for this September's meeting should be mailed to AFFIRMATION, [REDACTED], Evanston, IL [REDACTED]. [\$15.00]

REGISTRATION FORM for Bay Area Fall Meeting -- September 18,19,20, 1981

Name _____

☐ Enclosed is a check for \$15.00 to help pay for the cost of facilities.

Address _____

City/State _____ Zip _____

☐ I plan to attend the Bay Area meeting.

[My special needs are: _____]
[_____]
[_____]
[_____]
[_____]

☐ I need transportation from ☐ airport, ☐ bus, ☐ train station.

My arrival time _____ am pm 3/ /81; my departure time _____ am pm 3/ /81.

NOTE: Everyone needs to arrive by 6:00 p.m. Friday and depart no earlier than 2:00 p.m. Sunday
Mail this form to AFFIRMATION, P.O. Box 1021, Evanston, IL 60204

~~Affirmation~~
May 16, 1981

Mary Gaddis wants to tell everyone the final outcome of her case in court but Mary and her lawyer are working still in discussions. Mary says she'll have a full report soon.

Passed in Nashville

Statement of Position

We are AFFIRMATION: United Methodists for Lesbian/Gay Concerns. We are lesbians and gay men, and their supporters from all walks of life, from all parts of the country, from all races and ethnic groups, from the United Methodist Church.

We are deeply concerned about the rising climate of fear, hostility, and vindictiveness within our country and within our world. We view with horror and deep pain the murders of Black children in Atlanta, the continuing economic oppression and neglect of poor people in our country and around the world, the refusal of state legislatures to adopt equal rights for women as public policy, the reluctance of many institutions to spend money for equal access for the handicapped and the aging. We are also deeply concerned and angered that this climate of fear has been used to divide, separate and deny our civil and human rights, as evidenced by the recent murders of two gay men in New York City, the denial of custody rights to lesbian mothers and a threat against our March/spring meeting allegedly by a resurgent Klu Klux Klan.

Our deepest concern, however, is directed toward the church, and specifically the United Methodist Church, for its role in allowing, if not fostering, this climate which is oppressing our brothers and sisters and destroying our lives. We are outraged that an institution, which claims to be the body of Christ, is removing laypeople from positions of leadership, suppressing pastors who continue to speak out on our behalf, and denying, through kangaroo court procedures, innuendo, rumor, and unsolicited letters the calls of lesbians and gay men to share in the life and ministry of the church. Such actions are clearly in violation of Disciplinary procedures covenanted to by our denomination in 1980, and antithetical to our understanding of the Gospel's call that all persons are to be loved and affirmed in the power and grace of God.

We regret that discussions and press reports surrounding our struggles in the church have been at times inaccurate and distorted as to detail. However, such inaccuracies do not mean that these events are not occurring, nor do they lessen the pain and suffering we feel as a result of the violations that are coming down on us.

We refuse to give up hope in the midst of the current climate of fear. We understand our call as one to bring God's justice and reconciliation to all people who feel alienated and oppressed. In some cases this will mean confronting the church for unfaithful stances and behavior. We will not be moved in this ministry.

In the midst of our struggle we continue to hold in our love and prayers those who have been victimized by oppression. We continue to hold the church in our prayers. We rejoice in the power of the Holy Spirit which we find moving within our lives and within our movement. We commit ourselves in solidarity with all who experience pain and oppression. We invite the church to join in our struggle.



Evanston, IL

AFFIRMATION

Michael Troyer, editor

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY, STATE _____

ZIP _____

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+ [] This is a +
+ [] change of +
+ address ! +
+++++

I believe AFFIRMATION is important and I would like to pledge my continuing support.

☐ I will contribute \$ _____ per month for the next 12 months.

☐ I will send \$ _____ as a lump sum donation.

☐ Enclosed is \$15.00/1981 membership.[Bi-monthly newsletter —mailed bulk-rate UNSEALED.]

☐ Enclosed is \$20.00/1981 membership.[Bi-monthly newsletter —mailed First Class SEALED.]

Make check payable to: AFFIRMATION, _____ Evanston, IL _____
AFFIRMATION IS NOW TAX-EXEMPT; CONTRIBUTIONS ARE TAX DEDUCTABLE